

Message Text

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TAGS: MARR, MASS, GR, US

SUBJ: DEFMIN AVEROFF AGAIN SPEAKS OF GOG DESIRE FOR
RENEWAL OF US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: A) ATHENS 632; B) ATHENS 880

SUMMARY: ON FEBRUARY 14, DEFMIN AVEROFF AGAIN ANSWERED
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE STATE OF PREPARED-
NESS OF GREECE'S ARMED FORCES POSED BY A CU/NF DEPUTY,
WHO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO SECURE THE RESUMPTION OF
US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE. AVEROFF DENIED ALLEGED
AMMUNITION SHORTAGES EXISTED, ACKNOWLEDGED THE HIGH COST
OF ARMS, BUT STATED THE DETERMINATION OF GOG TO MAINTAIN
THE REQUIRED FIGHTING CAPABILITY OF GREECE'S ARMED FORCES.
HE INDICATED THAT THE GOG WAS AVOIDING ENTANGLING CURRENT
NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE QUESTION OF GRANT AID RESUMPTION.
END SUMMARY:

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1. AS HE HAS IN RECENT PAST (REFTELS), CU/NF DEPUTY

KONIOTAKIS IN THE FEB. 14 MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT QUESTIONED MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF ON VARIOUS MILITARY MATTERS, INCLUDING ALLEGED SHORTAGES OF ROCKETS FOR GREECE'S F-4 PHANTOMS. CONFUSING THE USG'S 1967-1970 SELECTIVE SUSPENSION OF DELIVERIES OF GRANT MILITARY MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE THEN-GOG, KONIOTAKIS STATED THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE "PROMISE OF THE CONGRESS" TO RESUME SUCH AID FOLLOWING THE RESTORATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, IT SHOULD AGAIN BE PROVIDED. HE THEREFORE CALLED ON THE GOG TO "TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE."

2. IN REPLY, AVEROFF DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF ANY SHORTAGE OF AMMUNITION FOR F-4S, AGREED THAT ARMS ACQUISITIONS WERE VERY EXPENSIVE, BUT POINTED OUT THAT GREECE WAS DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN AS A MINIMUM THE FIGHTING CAPACITY NECESSARY "TO SAFEGUARD TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL DIGNITY." HE NOTED THAT EVEN THE MINIMUM CAPACITY REQUIRED FOR THESE TASKS WAS "MOST EXPENSIVE" AND THAT SUCH EXPENSES COULD NOT BE FACED WITH A LIGHT HEART IN VIEW OF THE DEPLORABLE STATE OF GREECE'S FINANCES AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF DICTATORIAL RULE. AVEROFF CHARACTERIZED THE QUESTION OF THE RESUMPTION OF US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS BEING "AT A DELICATE STAGE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NEGOTIATIONS," NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE EVENTS MENTIONED BY KONIOTAKIS BUT ALSO "BECAUSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY BEING HELD." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE CURRENT (I.E., BASE RIGHTS) NEGOTIATIONS OUGHT NOT TO BE CONNECTED WITH THE QUESTION OF GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE SO THAT GREECE WOULD "NOT APPEAR TO BE ASKING FOR THINGS ON THE ONE HAND WHILE REJECTING OTHERS." HE CONCLUDED BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE RESUMPTION OF US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE WAS AN ISSUE BUT ONE WITH WHICH THE GOG HAD NOT YET COME TO GRIPS. HE ADDED THAT THE GOG WAS CONSIDERING THE MATTER AND WOULD HANDLE IT "ACCORDING TO DEVELOPMENTS."

3. COMMENT: AS NOTED BEFORE (REF B), AVEROFF'S REPEATED DISCUSSIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT OF THE GOG'S DESIRE AGAIN TO RECEIVE US GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE ARE A CLEAR INDICATION OF GOG'S INTENTIONS. THESE ADD TO EXPECTATIONS WHICH, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IF NOT MET, COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME TO BOTH THE GOG AND THE USG. ALTHOUGH THE GOG MIGHT WISH, AT LEAST FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION, TO KEEP SEPARATE THE BASE RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS AND ITS DESIRE FOR A RENEWAL OF GRANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THIS WOULD NOT PRECLUDE WHAT WE PERCEIVE AS A GOG EXPECTATION THAT IN ADDITION TO RENEWAL OF GRANT ASSISTANCE, IT MIGHT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN USG PAYMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF BASE RIGHTS NEGOTIATIONS FOR EXPANSION OF GOG FACILITIES

AT SOUDHA AB AND PERHAPS FOR NEW COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.
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